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ABSTRACT

Papers on parliamentary libraries presented at the 1986 International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) conference include: (1) "Library Support for Parliamentary Committees" (Peter Dawe, Switzerland), which considers the needs of parliamentary committees in terms of library materials and services; (2) "The National Assembly Library (NAL) of the Republic of Korea--An Overview" (Joobong Kim, Korea), which discusses the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, the NAL, and some problems currently confronting the NAL; (3) "Information Service in the Parliament of India" (Subhash Kashyap, India), which describes the history and organization of India's Library and Reference, Research, Documentation and Information Service (LARRDIS); and (4) "Foreign Information and Parliamentary Research in Japan--Current Reality and Future Expectations" (Satoshi Kurokawa, Japan), which discusses the acquisition and utilization of information about external affairs in Japan, with emphasis on the activities of the Research and Legislative Reference Bureau. (KM)

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1986

IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE, TOKYO

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Library Support for Parliamentary Committees

by

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LIBRARY SUPPORT FOR PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

by Peter DAWE,
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Introduction

Ever since the earliest beginnings of parliamentary democracy, Parliaments have used committees to assist them in their work. During the 20th century Parliaments have become increasingly involved in the manifold day-to-day activities of the nation, and with this involvement has come a growth in the number of committees. These committees help Parliament to better understand the sometimes highly complex and technical issues confronting a modern legislature as well as to help tackle the sheer volume of work which flows through the institution.

According to the 1986 edition of "Parliaments of the World" published by the International Centre for Parliamentary Documentation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, there are 143 Parliaments of sovereign States around the world. The 83 Parliaments described in the book have between them 1,373 permanent committees. In addition, there are many ad hoc or select committees which exist only for a relatively short time to examine and report on a particular matter. When one takes into consideration the 60 Parliaments of sovereign States not described in the book, as well as the many provincial regional or state Parliaments most of which have committees, it can be seen that the number of parliamentary committees existing throughout the world is very great indeed. Certainly there can be very few parliamentarians who do not serve on at least one parliamentary committee.

Types of Committees

The kinds of committees which are to be found within a Parliament include:

1. Legislative committees which examine Bills and new legislation (including Committee of the Whole House);

2. Domestic committees concerned with matters related to the functioning of Parliament such as standing orders, library, privileges, qualifications of Members, or selection of committee members;

3. Operational committees which prepare or assist in preparing the parliamentary programme and the daily agenda;

4. Special purpose committees to examine Government budgeting matters such as Finance or Estimates committees;

5. Investigative committees set up specially to investigate a particular matter as required by Parliament;

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6. Committees which routinely monitor the activity of the Executive and which may also undertake enquiries into matters of national concern or importance.

Often the role of a parliamentary committee covers several of the above aspects as for example the Legislative and General Purpose Committees of the Australian Senate, which cover 5 and 6 above, and to some extent 1, subject of course to an authorising reference from the Senate Chamber itself. The paper is broadly relevant for all types of committees but is written mainly with the requirements of 5 and 6 in mind.

Library Services

For the purposes of this paper, library support is taken to comprehend a coherent set of services from a library seen as:

- an organised store of knowledge in communication with other such stores;
- a provider of systematic information about the store of knowledge; and
- a provider of objective, succinct yet complete and timely summaries of available knowledge on a given topic.

In some Parliaments these three aspects of a library are furnished by three separate sections or departments known respectively as the library, the documentation service, and the research and reference service. In other Parliaments two, or even all three are combined organisationally under a single department of the library. Debate rages over the most appropriate structural and administrative arrangement, but whatever the merits or disadvantages of a particular arrangement, effective committee support demands close liaison between all three. In particular, it is important for a committee to have a single point of contact for all aspects of support and not to be placed in the position of de facto co-ordinator between two or more.

Requirements of Parliamentary Committees

To examine the requirements of a parliamentary committee for library support it is instructive to consider the needs of a newly-established general purpose and legislative committee. The mandate of such a committee covers scrutiny of Government activity in a particular area such as foreign policy, defense, trade, the environment or science and technology; the conduct of public inquiries into matters of public interest referred to it by Parliament; and the examination of new legislation or legislative amendments, again as referred to it by Parliament.

Such a committee will typically be provided with a staff comprising a Secretary, one or more research officers together with secretarial assistance. Much of the committee's contact with the library is likely to be made through its Secretary.

At the outset of its work the committee will require background information to bring it abreast of the current situation and outlook in its field of interest. This material will need to be augmented as appropriate to meet the requirements of the investigation being carried out or the legislation under examination by the committee. The paragraphs which follow indicate the kinds of material required by a typical committee.

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Bibliographies

An essential tool at the outset of any study by a committee is a bibliography of relevant publications and periodicals. In most cases the library should exercise some judgement in ensuring that the bibliography contains only the most significant relevant works in the field, as an exhaustive bibliography may contain so many titles that the likely effect is to confuse rather than assist the recipient. It is particularly helpful if definitive works or widely recognised authorities can be indicated in a first bibliography. After a little experience, a committee, with the help of its staff, is usually able to amplify the original bibliography supplied by the library by adding useful works which it comes across in the course of its investigation or which are quoted as references in other works studied.

Abstracts

Abstracts form an extremely valuable adjunct to bibliographies. It is common for a committee to request abstracts of works selected from a bibliography to help develop background knowledge of a subject or to choose a number of books or articles for deeper study. Committees often appreciate being supplied automatically with abstracts of new publications in their field. The coverage required by such a service can usually be agreed initially with the committee secretariat and adjusted subsequently in the light of experience.

Background Research

Many parliamentary libraries provide research services. Such services are extremely valuable to committees, not only at the outset of any particular inquiry to set the scene and survey the principal issues involved, but also on request, to provide a periodic appreciation of a changing situation or new development. From the library's point of view, research activities for a committee represent an efficient use of resources as the work is carried out not for a single Member of Parliament but for the group of parliamentarians which constitute the committee.

List of Contacts

Throughout its activities, and particularly at the start of an enquiry, a committee requires to establish and maintain contact with recognised authorities in its field as well as with parties likely to be most affected by changes related to legislation. The library can provide valuable assistance by compiling lists of major recognised authorities, agencies and other interested parties. Such lists will contain the names, addresses and telephone numbers of persons and organisations such as academies, research institutions, public servants and Government agencies, businesses, foundations, public and private organisations, community leaders, writers, critics and possibly also international organisations, overseas missions and foreign-based companies and agencies, depending on the field of interest. As with bibliographies, a committee, as it gains experience, will enlarge and develop its list of contacts.

Books and Reference Materials

It goes without saying that an essential feature of a library is its collection of books and reference materials. However, events in politics often move fast, reflecting new developments and fresh shifts in changing domestic and international situations. Committees usually need to follow these changes as they occur and, if possible, even to be somewhat ahead of the Government in anticipating change and appropriate parliamentary response. It is accordingly essential for a parliamentary library to ensure that its information on new publications in the fields of interest to its respective committees reflects contemporary change, and that either its relevant collections are maintained up to date or that it has rapid access to new material through a loans or external information exchange service.

Current Affairs

Allied to the above requirement is the need for an efficient current affairs service. This will embrace the collection of cuttings from newspapers and journals as well as a system for recording or ensuring other access to current affairs radio and television broadcasts. Ideally the library should be equipped to make transcripts of selected broadcasts on request. Having collected the material, it is important for the library to ensure that it is brought rapidly and regularly to the attention of the appropriate committees, and in particular that a committee is advised immediately of any particularly significant development in its field. Regular browsing amongst topical journals and relevant new books by committee staff can be an effective way of keeping abreast of current events. Access to the library for this purpose is accordingly important. The staff could also be placed on a circulation list for appropriate journals, or even provided with a separate copy of the most relevant ones.

Liaison Between Library and Committee

A library is not able to provide the support already mentioned unless it knows what the particular needs of the respective committees are and is provided with feedback on the usefulness or otherwise of the materials and services supplied. In particular, services which are no longer required by a committee should be stopped promptly. It is accordingly necessary for committees and library to liaise closely and frequently. This can conveniently be done by having a person in the library who is responsible for maintaining liaison with one or several committees, and who is normally the first point of contact between library and committee at the working level.

Library Access

Parliamentary libraries were originally created to provide assistance, in person, to Members of Parliament. This of course remains a prime commitment of all parliamentary libraries. Many libraries, seeing their primary responsibility to individual Members, and having limited resources at their disposal, quite properly made it difficult for persons other than parliamentarians to gain access to the library and library services. Some still apply strict restrictions.

In modern times, and particularly during the 20th century, the growing complexity and reach of a typical parliamentarian's work has led, in many countries, to a vast increase in the number of staff members recruited to assist parliamentarians. This is particularly true of committee staff, who, in order to serve their committees well, need ready access to the library and its services. The requirements of committees and their staff should accordingly be given careful consideration when examining policies and priorities for library access.

Oral Tradition

Information can be transmitted in writing and numbers, in the form of pictures and graphs, as well as through the spoken word. In earlier times the spoken form was predominant but with the invention of movable type and, more recently, the emergence of widespread literacy, information in written or graphical form often seems to have become predominant. The world "seems" is used advisedly, as a little reflection shows that the spoken word, whether in schools, in business, or radio and TV, or in Parliaments, remains the most widely-used medium for exchange of information.

Wisdom springs from knowledge, and knowledge from the distillation and comparison of information. In this process, speech, as the vehicle of thought, plays a vital role.

In January 1973, the Inter-Parliamentary Union organised an international symposium on the parliamentarian's requirements for information in the modern world. There were about 100 participants including 34 Members of Parliament. Thirty-six countries were represented. One of the significant points made at the symposium was the importance of the spoken word in the work of Parliaments. Several speakers drew attention to the enormous range of subjects with which a Member of Parliament must be familiar and spoke of the extraordinarily busy schedule of a typical MP, which leaves little time for reading. Under these circumstances the MP requires information which is concise and bears directly upon the matters under consideration. In particular, information which can be conveyed quickly in spoken form and which can readily be retained in the memory, is much appreciated. In this respect, a number of participants in the symposium saw an increasing need to return to what was referred to as an "oral tradition" in the exchange of information.

In an age of computerised data banks it may seem strange to speak of providing information in oral form, particularly in this distinguished gathering of librarians. Nevertheless I would remind you that papers for this Conference are prepared for oral delivery, and a very great part of the value of the Conference would be lost if it were to be reduced to a mere exchange by mail of written papers.

Reflection upon this thought may provide guidance for all those who work in reference or research libraries in developing a practical approach to better assist their clients.

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The National Assembly Library of the Republic of Korea: an overview

by

Joobong KIM
National Assembly Library
Seoul, KOREA

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THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA: AN OVERVIEW

Joobong Kim

Director

National Assembly Library
Republic of Korea

0027

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA: AN OVERVIEW

It is indeed an honour and a pleasure to have the opportunity to discuss on how the National Assembly Library of the Republic of Korea works and what are some of current problems confronting it at this auspicious Parliamentary Libraries Section of IFLA.

To give you an idea the scale of the role played by the National Assembly Library (NAL), I should perhaps begin by briefly outlining our legislature, number of members, sitting days, committee systems, etc.

Our National Assembly, with its grand new building of granite stone (completed in 1975) on an island surrounded by the Han River, is the focal point of our representative democracy where 276 elected members gather throughout the year to debate national policies and to consider legislative matters for the general welfare of the country. During the past thirty-eight years since the first National Assembly was inaugurated in May 1948, it has gradually consolidated its foundation as the sole legislative body which provides the machinery, together with other national institutions, for governing the nation.

The National Assembly started as a unicameral legislature in 1948 and though once during the Fifth Assembly (1960-61) it was modelled on bicameralism, it soon returned to being a one-house body.

The present Twelfth National Assembly convened on 11 August 1985 and is composed of 276 members; 184 of whom are elected in 92 electoral districts and the remaining 92 through a proportional representative system. Members of the National Assembly have a four-year term of office. The current distribution of seats in the National Assembly is as follows: the ruling Democratic Justice Party 148; the New Democratic Party 90; Korea National Party 21 and Independents 16.

Under the Constitution, the National Assembly meets either in regular or in special sessions. The regular session convenes once a year on

20 September and lasts for 90 days. A special session is convoked either by the President or by at least once-third of the members. The Assembly may not be in session for more than 150 days a year, including 90 days of regular session; however, the session period convened by presidential request is not counted in this total.

The National Assembly has one Speaker and two Vice-Speakers (one representing the opposition party); all three of whom are elected.

In addition to the Speaker, there are two important elements as the Assembly's governing bodies: the House Steering Committee and the Parliamentary Groups (the Political Negotiation Groups) represented by the Party floor leaders. Any political group which has more than 20 seats may form a parliamentary group. The National Assembly Law provides that the floor leaders automatically become members of the House Steering Committee and that the Speaker is to consult with it on major house business. It is also common that floor leaders meet frequently to discuss and negotiate on matters relating to legislative work.

Specialised legislative committees are also the basic working bodies of the National Assembly. They are entrusted with the elaboration of all bills for debate in plenary session and they function as efficient units to follow and watch the work of the administrative departments. They are entirely free to accept or refuse amendments, introduce all kinds of modifications and even to refuse bills all together.

There are thirteen Standing Committees: the House Steering Committee; Legislation and Justice; Foreign Affairs; Home Affairs; Finance; Economy and Science; National Defense; Education and Public Information; Agriculture and Fishery; Commerce and Industry; Health and Social Affairs; Transportation and Communication; Construction.

The National Assembly, of course, has its Secretariat and Library to provide support for the legislative activities of the members and committees. The Secretary General is appointed by the Speaker with the consent of the National Assembly while the Director of the Library is

apointed by the Speaker upon the recommendation of the Secretary General .

The National Assembly Library of the Republic of Korea (NAL), which has been growing through several amendments of the National Assembly Law has a history of thirty four years since its founding on 20 February 1952 in Pusan, the wartime capital of the Republic. The NAL has a collection of some 500,000 volumes of books and a staff of 137 as of the end of 1985.

The NAL is one of two depository libraries in Korea--the other being the National Central Library. According to the provisions of Article 7 of the National Assembly Law, 30 copies of any publication needed for legislative activities or international exchange purposes published either by government agencies or government-affiliated organizations and two copies of such publications published by commercial firms are to be deposited with the NAL not later than 30 days after its publication. A sum of money equivalent to 50 percent of the net prices of deposited materials from commercial firms may be paid to the depositor in pursuance of the pertinent provisions of the Law.

The NAL also collects foreign literature in the field of social sciences. Such materials are collected through purchases, gifts and international exchanges. The NAL currently has book exchange programs with some 350 institutions in 83 countries. Priority in purchase is given to materials specifically requested by Assemblymen, staff members of various Committees and the Legislative Research Bureau. In order to speedily collect foreign materials, the NAL stations one resident officer each in the US and Japan. The NAL also receives some 5,000 titles of foreign and domestic periodicals and newspapers through annual subscription and exchange.

Since the NAL is not a public library, eligible users are restricted to (a) members of the National Assembly and their staff; (b) officials of the National Assembly Secretariat; (c) staff members of the public and academic institutions; (d) students at the graduate level. Though priority is given to the users of the above four categories, the general public is also given service on the basis of availability. On the other hand,

the bibliographic services offered by the NAL currently cover the following: (a) monthly and annual acquisition lists; (b) index to Korean-language periodical articles; (c) monthly publication introducing contents of selected foreign language periodicals; (d) index to National Assembly Rocords; (e) indexed lists of theses for doctorate and master's degree in Korea; (f) index to the laws of the Republic of Korea. In addition, the NAL publishes Tosŏgwanbo, the only available monthly journal in Korea dealing with library and information sciences.

Having briefly outlined the scale of the role to be played by the NAL, I now wish to turn to some of the major problem areas confronted by the Library. The first problem ares is the perrennial question of how best the Legislative Research Bureau can support the various legislative activities and the other is the seemingly impossible task of computarisation of the Library.

Ever since its establishment in 1952, and especially since the creation of its Legislative Research Bureau in 1963, the primary objective of the NAL has been to provide Assemblymen with the results of research into various domestic and international affairs. In order to operate its reference service effectively, the Legislative Research Bureau has developed expertise in various specialised fields and carries out, in preparation for anticipated inquiries, programmes to research, collect and compile useful data and materials relating to matters to be discussed in the forthcoming sessions of the Assembly.

The role of the Legislative Research Bureau, however, has been the subject of heated debate ever since its creation in general and since the beginning of the Eleventh National Assembly in 1981 in particular. In fact, those who questioned the effectiveness of the legislative research function of the Library argued that the Library itself must be absorbed all together into the Secretariat rather than remained independently from the Secretariat in order to maximise its usefulness in supporting legislative activities.

On the other hand, those who opposed this view concede that the Library under the supervision of Secretary General perhaps would be a good idea,

but they argue that the Legislative Research Bureau should remain in the Library under the direction of Chief Librarian. After an endless debate (which technically speaking is still continuing), the former view prevailed.

Accordingly, the sweeping reorganisation of the Secretariat as well as the NAL took place in March last year (1985). Main features of organisational reshuffle are as follows:

1) The NAL no longer enjoys independent status and is now under the direct supervision of the Secretary General;
2) The Legislative Research Bureau was removed from the Library, placing it under the control of the Deputy Secretary General for Legislative Affairs;
3) Two subsections dealing with serials and computerisation of the Library were expanded and elevated to independent sections;
4) The rank of the Chief Librarian was lowered from that of Vice Minister to First Grade (equivalent to Assistant Minister).

It is still much too premature to say whether or not the new arrangement is more effective than the old system in terms of legislative support the Legislative Research Bureau provides. It must be pointed out, however, that questions are often raised in many quarters, including members of the National Assembly, whether the Legislative Research Bureau can indeed function effectively while remaining outside the Library.

Another major problem area in recent years which is far more difficult to solve is the computarisation of the Library. As mentioned earlier, the Library has been putting out such bibliographic publications as acquisitions lists, indexes to Korean-language periodical articles, subject catalogues, etc. Rapid increase in the number of publications to be handled, however, caused delays in publishing these bibliographies. One of the aims of the NAL in introducing library automation several years ago was, therefore, to solve this problem of delays in publication. Library services so far "computarized" and publications produced using computer are as follows:

(a) Compilation of the Korean periodical index;

(b) Compilation of lists of theses for doctorate and Master's degrees in Korea;

(c) Compilation of lists of Western language books.

It must be noted, however, that the computarisation so far attempted by the NAL was solely for the purpose of compilation for publication and not for information retrieval. As things stand now, there are a number of extremely difficult bibliographic control problems that need to be solved if we are ever to use computers for cataloguing and information retrieval in the NAL.

The first problem is the problem of language. The collection of the NAL consists of books and serials in Korean (50%), Japanese (20%), English (25%) and other languages (5%). It should be noted, first of all, that the Korean language (Japanese language is the same) is written in combination of Hangul (Korean alphabet) and Chinese characters. And yet, the Korean language is an entirely different language either from Chinese or Japanese, although Westerners are often confused because all three languages use the identical Chinese characters. Accordingly, the unique and crucial problem with which the NAL is confronted from the very outset of planning for library computerisation is the problem of how to input and output Korean alphabet along with Chinese characters at the same time.

Perhaps the more difficult and far more serious problem in the longer range perspective associated with the computerisation of the NAL, as any other libraries in Korea, is the underdevelopment of terms to designate the subjects. It is not easy to find a uniform or standardised approach to subject analysis because of the extent of intellectual decision-making and diversity required in indicating subject content together with the bibliographic record. The near total absence of proper subject heading lists in Korea is further aggravated by the constantly changing approach to knowledge such as the growth of new subjects, variation in subject developments, etc.

A related problem is the scarcity of well-trained subject specialists with sufficient knowledge of foreign languages, especially English and Japanese. An intelligent decision-making in designating subject content in their own native language is difficult enough. When this problem is compounded by language difficulties, the task of giving proper subject headings seems almost insurmountable.

Then there is a problem of romanisation of author's name (Japanese names in particular) and title of books into Roman alphabet. Romanisation of Japanese names, for example, is no simple task. Many words looking quite different in the original script, and having different meanings, sound the same and have the same romanisation. The task of romanising Japanese name is further complicated by the fact that the same word is often pronounced and romanised differently!

So far, only the most obvious problem areas associated with the computerisation of the NAL have been mentioned here. In fairness, computers have brought tremendous change and performed remarkable feats in almost all aspects of life in developed as well as in developing countries. It must be said unfortunately, however, that as far as the computerisation of the NAL is concerned there seems to be no basis for an early optimism.

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Information Service in the Parliament of India

by

Subhash KASHYAP

Delivered by Dermot ENGLEFIELD

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INFORMATION SERVICE IN THE PARLIAMENT OF INDIA

BY DR SUBHASH KASHYAP*

INTRODUCTION: Delivered by Dermot Englefield, Deputy Librarian, House of Commons and Chairman of the IFLA Parliamentary Librarians Section.

The legislature is the supreme deliberative body of a country and as such a wide range of topics covering almost all spheres of national and international activity come up for discussion before it from time to time. In the present day technological and scientific age, developments take place at an amazingly fast speed. To keep abreast of these developments and to make an effective contribution to the deliberations of the House, the legislator must have information. Also, in the context of the widening scope and complexity of public administration and the unprecedented technological revolution, information becomes increasingly vital for someone to undertake a legislator's job. It is however, not a question of lack of information: there is perhaps too much of it on too many subjects from a wide variety of sources. Since the present day legislator is proverbially hard pressed for time, information has to be supplied to him, if possible at his doorstep - almost through the taps - just what he needs and when he needs it.

The sources of a parliamentarian's information are many but inasmuch as a modern government is the greatest single monopolist of information, most legislatures and legislators - more particularly in the developing nations - have to rely very heavily on the executive departments for their information requirements. Even though efficiently collected and processed, this information may, consciously or unconsciously, get slanted or biased in favour of the ends of government and may not always be considered entirely factual or objective. Information from other sources, like the mass media, interest groups or lobbyists, etc. would be even less objective. Hence, it is imperative for a legislature to develop its own institutionalized sources of information, an independent information reservoir with specialised dissemination procedures. In other words, members of Parliament should not only have access to a well-equipped library but also receive, on a continuous and

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regular basis, factual, non-partisan, objective and reliable information and authoritative data on socio-economic problems, national and international political developments, and scientific and technological advancement, in fact on a wide range of problems facing the nation and the measures coming before Parliament. This type of service can be provided only by a self-contained organisation within the Parliament. In India, the Library and Reference, Research, Documentation and Information Service, LARRDIS in short, is the organisation which meets all the information needs of the members of both Houses of Indian Parliament - Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

HISTORY

Until 1921 there was no separate Library for members of the Indian legislature. It was only in 1921 that a small Library was, for the first time, established in the then Central Legislative Assembly. This continued to serve members on a very modest scale for a number of years. After the country achieved independence in 1947 and the Constituent Assembly commenced the work of drafting a new Constitution for free India, the demands on the library started multiplying. The year 1950, when India became a sovereign, democratic republic with a Bicameral Parliament consisting of nearly 750 members, saw the beginning of a systematic expansion of the Parliament Library's collections both quantitatively and qualitatively. A beginning was also made in setting up a Members' Reference Service within the newly set up Research and Reference Branch, which initially functioned independently of the Parliament Library.

During the past three and a half decades, the library as well as research and reference services for members have gradually developed into what is now familiarly known as LARRDIS. The present set-up and nomenclature of the integrated service is the result of a major functional reorganisation of the Secretariates of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, brought about during 1974-75. In 1976 a Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training was set up manned by the LARRDIS staff. The Director of LARRDIS was simultaneously the Director of the Bureau also. Recently, in 1984-85, the work relating to the establishment of a Parliamentary Museum and Archives and a Hall of National Achievements has also been entrusted to the LARRDIS.

The entire Service has been divided into six functional divisions, viz. the Library Division, Reference and Documentation Division, Research and Information Division (A), Research and Information Division (B), Parliamentary Museum and Archives Division and the Hall of National Achievements Division. Each Division is headed by a Deputy Director, with a Director as the head of the LARRDIS, ultimately responsible to the Secretary-General, Lok Sabha.

I. LIBRARY DIVISION

The Parliament Library, with its present holdings of nearly a million volumes of printed books, reports, governmental publications, UN Reports, debates of foreign Parliaments and State Legislatures in India, gazettes and other documents and nearly one thousand one hundred current journals and periodicals, has grown almost from scratch and is today one of the finest and richest repositories in the country. Periodicals and publications added to the Library include quite a few brought out by the Lok Sabha Secretariate itself. The Library receives as many as 277 Indian and foreign newspapers regularly for the use of members.

Books and publications for the Library are selected and acquired from the entire field of human activity relating to almost all subjects but with special emphasis, of course, on the legislative requirements of members. The procedure for acquisition of new books is so regulated that there is a minimum time-lag between the publication of a book and its actually reaching the library shelves. Important Indian books and topical publications are obtained almost immediately on their release.

The Parliament Library does not depend only on direct purchase of books and publications for enriching its collections. Under the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, all State Governments are expected to acquire and send a copy of each of the books printed in their respective states, to the Parliament Library. All Ministries of the Government of India, including their Departments as well as attached and subordinate offices, likewise, are expected to supply to the Parliament Library, copies of all their publications, reports etc. Elaborate exchange arrangements are also in operation with numerous governmental and non-governmental institutions in India and abroad, for sending all their publications in exchange

for publications brought out by the Lok Sabha Secretariate. The Parliament Library is a depository library for all the unrestricted publications of the United Nations and its agencies.

All Library acquisitions are processed and classified according to the Dewey Decimal System. A Parliament Library Bulletin, containing titles of the latest additions and an indication of the contents thereof, is published every week for the information of members and other users of the Library.

The issue of books and other publications to members is regulated by the Parliament Library Rules which are framed on the recommendations of the Library Committee of Parliament. Facilities are available to members for quiet study in the Library. Spacious and comfortable study rooms have been provided specially for their use, in the Library.

A Library Committee is constituted every year by the Speaker, Lok Sabha to advise him on all matters concerning the development of the Parliament Library. At present the Committee consists of six members from Lok Sabha and three from Rajya Sabha, nominated by the Presiding Officers of the respective Houses. The Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha is the ex-officio Chairman of the Library Committee.

The Parliament Library possesses a rich collection of rare books on art, painting, sculpture and architecture. Books on Indian Art cover a broad canvas of Indian history depicting different stages in its evolution. These include the painting of various schools of art such as Mughal, Rajput, Kangra, Garhwal and the like. The foreign art collections comprise the creations of celebrated artists like Michaelangelo, Leonard Da Vinci, Raphael and also works on Chinese and Japanese art, Russian, German, French, American and Arabian paintings.

As a mark of respect to the memory of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, a separate Gandhiana section was opened in the Parliamentary Library on August 9, 1978. Members and scholars interested in a deeper study and extensive research on the life and works of Mahatma Gandhi have welcomed the Gandhiana, which contains books by and on Mahatma Gandhi in English, Hindi and several other regional languages of India.

The Parliament Library has, of late, been laying great emphasis on developing its regional language collections. A separate wing containing holdings in various Indian languages has been carved out in the Library which at present receives as many as 93 regional language periodicals embracing almost every segment of Indian society.

In January 1985 a start was made with computerised Information Services in the Parliament Library with the assistance of National Informatics Centre of the Department of Electronics. The Computer Centre of the Parliament Library has two Computer Terminals with the provision of hard copy facility. The information, being presently stored in the computer, relates to matters like the indices to selected parliamentary questions, debates/ discussions, bills, etc.

The rich resources of the Parliament library viz. rare books, debates, reports, acts, newspapers, journals, etc. which run into several million pages need to be properly maintained and preserved. Also, there is the perennial problem of space which has to be saved for the new acquisitions and the new services. For this reason, the Library Committee approved on August 7, 1985, the setting up of a fully-fledged integrated Microfilming Unit in the Parliament Library. Steps have been initiated to acquire microfilm cameras (one Rotary and another Planetary), a Processor, Duplicator and Microimage Terminal (Reader Printer), which provide for computer assisted retrieval of information from the microfilms.

Besides its conventional functions, the Parliament Library has, in recent years, ventured into other activities like the arranging of exhibitions, discussion-sessions and lectures in order to generate and sustain the interest of members of Parliament in the holdings of the Library and to assess ways and means of enriching these further.

Since 1980, the Parliament Library has also been participating in the anniversary celebrations of the birth of late Jawaharial Nehru, the First Prime Minister of India, by arranging pictorial exhibitions with varying themes such as "Glimpses of Nehru", "Nehru and National Integration", "Nehru, Nature and Environment" and "Nehru and His Legacy: Independence and Democracy". In 1985, in addition to an Exhibition, a Seminar on "Nehru and Parliament" was also organised to mark the 96th birth anniversary of Pandit Nehru.

II. REFERENCE AND DOCUMENTATION DIVISION

The information requirements of parliamentarians are legion and so are, therefore, their demands on LARRDIS. This Division is fully equipped to handle all reference enquiries received from members of Parliament. The Members' Reference Service is supplemented by a Documentation Wing, Press Clipping Service and Reprography Section.

Members' Reference Service

Reference services provided by LARRDIS are qualitatively as well as quantitatively different from similar services provided by other libraries. Members' Reference Service broadly performs the following functions:-

i) Provision of on-the-spot information to members;

ii) Collection of latest relevant material, factual data, statistics, etc.; and

iii) The preparation of bibliographies and reference notes on important legislative measures.

The scope of material to be collected in response to members' enquiries is normally limited to subjects connected with the immediate business before the two Houses of Parliament. Information is culled from authentic sources, arranged and edited in the form of notes or tables and passed on to the members concerned by the stipulated date and time. When information is readily available in published documents and does not involve preparation of any detailed analysis or compilation, references are shown to members on the spot. All books, reports and other documents relevant to a particular Bill or subject under discussion in Parliament are listed and placed in separate Study Boxes for reference and consultation in the Library by interested members at their convenience.

The popularity of Members' Reference Service can be gauged from the marked increase in the number of enquiries received and handled during the past few years. As against 700 enquiries handled in 1970, the number rose to 950 in 1974. The year 1977 witnessed a sudden increase to the 1,000 mark for the first time in the history of Members' Reference Service and stood at 1,120. The year 1978 saw a more than two-fold increase of the future with the number totalling 2,480. During 1980, a record number of 3,627 reference were received and handled. In the years 1981, 1982, 1983 and 1984, the number of references received was 3,440, 2,685, 2,962 and 2,444 respectively. During 1985 the number was as high as 3,887.

Enquiries from members are received all the year round, both during session as well as inter-session periods. During the term of the Seventh Lok Sabha (1980-84), out of a total of 15,158 references, as many as 3,933 were dealt with during the inter-session periods.

Documentation Service

The location, collection, classification and cataloguing of all documents and records such as books, reports, periodicals, press clippings and hundreds of other documents including papers laid on the Tables of the two Houses of Parliament are the main functions performed by the Documentation Wing or Service. These annotated abstracts and other materials serve as invaluable aids for further research and reference activities, are published in the form of an indexed periodical, the Documentation Fortnightly and also ad hoc documentation lists. In addition, cards are prepared on all important subjects and filed in card-catalogue cabinets to faciliate future referencing work.

Press Clipping Service

This Service was started on a modest scale in the year 1956 with the limited object of speedy disposal of enquiries from members on current subjects. The scope of the service has considerably widened over the years and it is now organised more methodically to serve as an essential and basic aid for parliamentary research and reference work. Two separate sections for Hindi and English newspaper clippings are maintained. All important news and views, which include editorial comments and articles from eight Hindi and sixteen English dailies, are clipped and maintained in separate folders, in accordance with a specially devised classification scheme. Press releases of the Press Information Bureau, Government of India, on matters of current interest are also examined regularly and relevant releases maintained along with other press clippings.

Reprography Service

A reprography unit was set up in 1975 to meet the urgent needs of members for photocopies of important press clippings, parliamentary questions and answers, articles in periodicals and newspapers and extracts from books and other documents. The unit at present is equipped with the Electronic Stencil Cutting machine with a duplicator, a Gevafox X-10 Copier, Electro-Copier OCE-1250, Canon 210 and a Canon 271. The ultimate objective is gradually to build up the unit into a fully-fledged Reprography Section with more machines of the latest models. Members can also

avail themselves of the reprography service by having photocopies made of their personal documents on nominal payment.

III. RESEARCH AND INFORMATION DIVISIONS

Research and information services for members of Parliament are provided by the Research and Information Division - which, for administrative convenience, is sub-divided into 'A' and 'B' Divisions, each headed by a Deputy Director. The two Divisions consist of five self-contained functional Wings, dealing with Political Affairs, Economic and Financial Affairs; Education, Scientific and Social Affairs; Legal and Constitutional Affairs; and Parliamentary Affairs.

The functions of the Research and Information Divisions are broadly to anticipate and identify subjects of current parliamentary interest, including legislative measures, on which Parliament is likely to undertake discussion and which are likely to generate demands from members for detailed information and data.

A constant endeavour is made to keep Members of Parliament informed of current developments, both national and international, in various fields by the timely issue of objective information materials like brochures, information bulletins, background notes, fact sheets and the like. Handy pamphlets are also prepared and circulated for the use of members. All these publications are based on authentic published sources and continuous efforts are made to keep these up-to-date.

During the life of the Seventh Lok Sabha, the Research and Information Divisions brought out brochures, background notes and studies on important subjects like 'Parliament and Scrutiny of Science Policy'; 'Preventive Detention Law in India'; 'Financial Accountability of the Executive to Parliament'; 'Electoral Systems in the United States and India: a comparative study', etc. An illustrated brochure entitled 'Parliament of India', with coloured illustrations about Parliamentary buildings, was also published and released to Members and an informative publication 'Legislators in India: Salaries and Other Facilities'.

During 1985, the first year of the Eighth Lok Sabha, the Research and Information Divisions brought out a large number of brochures on various topics such as 'Presidential Ordinances, 1950-84'; 'Broadcasting and Telecasting of Parliamentary Proceedings'; 'Members of Lok Sabha, 1952-84 - A Study in their Socio-Economic Background'. These and similar publications were found very useful by the Members and were widely appreciated.

The Research and Information Divisions are also entrusted with special assignments like the preparation of briefs, background papers, research notes etc. for the use of Members attending various national and international parliamentary conferences held in India and abroad, viz. Conferences of Presiding Officers of Legislative Bodies in India, Conferences of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Commonwealth Speakers' Conferences and meetings of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table. Detailed country notes are also prepared for parliamentary delegations going abroad on goodwill missions.

Background notes are also prepared for use at the seminars and symposia held on the occasion of the annual Presiding Officers' Conferences and also those organised by the Indian Parliamentary Group and the Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training. Apart from Members of Parliament, members of various State Legislatures also take part in such symposia and seminars. Some of the subjects on which Background Notes were prepared for use at these seminars in the recent past were 'Parliamentary Privileges', 'Financial Committees', 'Social Legislation and Problems of its Implementation', etc.

Besides ad hoc publications, Research and Information Divisions also publish some important periodicals for the use of Members. These are:

i) Journal of Parliamentary Information (Quarterly).

ii) Digest of Central Acts (Quarterly).

iii) Digest of Legislative and Constitutional Cases (Quarterly).

iv) Abstracts of Books, Reports and Articles (Quarterly)

v) Diary of Political Events (Monthly).

vi) Public Undertakings: Digest of News and Views (Monthly).

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IV. PARLIAMENTARY MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES DIVISION

The Parliamentary Museum and Archives Division is entrusted with the work of raising a museum and archives devoted exclusively to the origin, growth and structure of the parliamentary institutions in India. It also looks after all the Press and Public relations work of the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

Parliamentary Museum and Archives

In 1976, the Lok Sabha Secretariat set up a Parliamentary Archives of Photographs and Films to preserve an authentic, comprehensive and up-to-date pictorial record of the history of the institution of Parliament, its activities and personalities. Since this was not considered adequate a proposal for setting up a Parliamentary Museum and Archives was conceived and its broad outlines were approved by the General Purposes Committee of the Lok Sabha on August 1, 1984.

The aim of the Parliamentary Museum and Archives is to preserve the past and the present for the future, by protecting from the ravages of time and neglect all the precious records, historic documents and articles connected with the Constitution and the Parliament and through them to make the history and growth of parliamentary institutions and the political system better understood.

The museum will strive to show with the help of models, charts, illustrations, objects, photographs and other visual techniques, the evolution and functioning of parliamentary institutions in India and abroad. The Photo Archives, the nucleus of which already exists in the Secretariate proposes to expand its collections by the acquisition of objects of rare historical value in order to serve as a repository and the feeder unit for the proposed museum.

The Archives Wing plans to acquire and preserve the records connected with the framing of India's Constitution and the growth and work of parliamentary institutions, and the private papers of eminent parliamentarians irrespective of their political affiliations. It will also provide for proper repair, renovation, conservation, cataloguing and storage of the rare documents and manuscripts under ideal conditions. At a suitable time, these will be open for consultation to scholars, private as well as official, in

order to promote scholarly ventures in the sphere of parliamentary and democratic traditions, practices and institutions. Further dissemination of information on these subjects is expected to be achieved through scholarly contacts and through seminars, symposia, talks, lectures, etc. The Archives will be equipped with Conservation and Photo Labs to function as a self contained unit.

From time to time, the Museum and Archives Division in co-operation with official agencies, organises for Members of Parliament and the general public exhibitions on varying themes, mostly connected with the functioning and achievements of Parliament.

Press and Public Relations

All Press and Public Relations work of the Lok Sabha Secretariate involving, in the main, the maintenance of continuous liaison with the Press, various governmental publicity organisations and the media, is looked after by the Press and Public Relations Wing. This Wing also deals with all matters concerning the Press Gallery of Lok Sabha including the issue of Press Gallery passes and provision of facilities to correspondents covering the proceedings of Lok Sabha. Press releases on all matters connected with the Sessions of Lok Sabha, the meetings of the Parliamentary Committees and Conferences, the visits of foreign parliamentary delegations to India and of Indian delegations to foreign countries, are also issued by the Press and Public Relations Wing together with "Lok Sabha Who's Who" containing the biographical sketches and photographs of members of Lok Sabha.

Teleprinter Service

In order to keep Members posted with the latest developments in the country and abroad, particularly during sessions of Parliament, teleprinter machines, fed by national news agencies, have been installed in Parliament House. Important news items received on these machines are collected, edited and displayed on a news display board located near the Ground Floor Library, at regular intervals throughout the day.

V. HALL OF NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS DIVISION

The General Purposes Committee of the Lok Sabha, on August 1, 1984, approved a proposal for the establishment of a Hall of National Achievements which would seek to present an overall picture of the progress the nation has achieved in diverse fields particularly since independence. It is proposed to present through exhibitions, models, photographs and other visual material a panoramic view of India's achievements since independence. The underlying idea is to project through audio-visual means an integrated and healthy image of the country to members of foreign parliamentary delegations, visiting dignitaries, students, tourists coming to Delhi and others.

VI. NEW LIBRARY BUILDING

The Parliament Library is currently facing an acute shortage of space in Parliament House. This restricts the multi-dimensional expansion of not only the collections but also several other activites that could be undertaken. Plans are already under way however to construct a new functionally viable building for the Library of Parliament which will not only take care of the future expansion of the Library's acquisitions, but also provide for advanced information storage and retrieval systems. Various Divisions and Wings of the LARRDIS will also be housed in the new building, which is likely to be adjacent to the Parliament House Annexe.

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Foreign Information and Parliamentary Research in Japan: Current Reality and Future Expectations

by

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1. Foreign Information and Japanese Lawmakers

It is my pleasure to talk to the distinguished audience of the Parliamentary Libraries Section about Japanese experience in acquiring and utilizing foreign information for parliamentary research. The term foreign information may be ambiguous, as it can mean both information from abroad and information about foreign countries. However, as both types of information essentially correlate and overlap each other, and as we are involved in both areas interchangeably, I will not draw an exact line between them in my talk. What I call foreign information here is information about external affairs, and is, in its most reliable form, expressed in the language of the country concerned and is obtained from that country.

As Mr. Hayashi, my predecessor and former Director of the Research and Legislative Reference Bureau (then Department), reported in the Chicago meeting, one-third of all Diet Members' inquiries handled by the Bureau are concerned with external affairs. There exists a Japanese tradition that lawmakers turn to foreign countries whenever they are faced with problems that need solving through new legislation.

Today, Japan is accused by foreign countries for its huge trade imbalance caused by excessive exports. However, throughout its long history, Japan has been unilaterally importing a tremendous amount of things from foreign countries, including information on the advanced culture and legal systems of the time. In ancient days, Japanese envoys, known as kenzuishi or kentoshi, sailed the wild sea to China in the Sui and Tang periods, and brought back much information useful to nation-building. The famous Taiho Code in 701 and many other legislative codes developed in the ancient ages of aristocracy were modelled after Chinese ones. On the other hand, at the beginning of modern times, the Meiji government, which succeeded the shogunal feudal government, imported western culture and civilization. Many envoys were then sent to western countries to learn completely new social and political ideas and technologies. Most of the fundamental framework of Japan as a modern nation-state was developed in the Meiji era under the overwhelming influence of European countries, particularly Germany, Great Britain, and France. Then, after World War II, the United States became, through the Occupation, a model for our rebuilding of the nation, and naturally the most important supplier of information on political, economic, and social systems.

More than thirty years after the end of the Occupation, it is now argued that Japan is faced with the loss of a model. However, even so, it seems to me that this loss of a model is now forcing Japanese legislators to look for more foreign information, in order to find our own way by comparison with as many foreign countries as possible.

2. Foreign Information and the Services of the Research and Legislative Reference Bureau

The way for Japanese lawmakers to acquire and utilize foreign information differ, of course, according to the system of lawmaking in use at the time. While the role of the prewar Imperial Diet had been rather limited, under the present constitution promulgated in 1946 following World War II, the power of the Japanese parliament (Diet) was strengthened remarkably and it became the highest organ of state power. In order for the Diet to perform its responsibility satisfactorily, several assisting bodies, such as Legislative Bureaus of the respective Houses, research staffs for each standing committee, and the National Diet Library with its Research and Legislative Reference Department as its internal organ, were organized. Among others, the Research and Legislative Reference Department was established with great expectation that it would provide the Diet and Diet Members with information indispensable for consideration of state affairs, including foreign information.

As a matter of fact, research in the affairs of foreign countries constitutes a significant part of the services by the Bureau. In addition to the fact that one-third of all inquiries from Diet Members concern with external affairs as I mentioned before, most research work carried out and published by analysts of the Bureau in anticipation of Diet Members' use is related to foreign matters. For example, take the research reports published in our monthly organ "Reference." The April '86 issue contains four major reports: "United Nations Peace-Keeping Operation," "The system of teacher education in West Germany," "Normal hours of work and overtime regulation in industrialised countries," and "Commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of His Majesty the Emperor's accession to the throne." Major reports of the May issue are: "University policy of West Germany -- the revision of Hochschulrahmengesetz," "Party realignment in American South," and "The constitution of the Republic of Portugal, 1982 (1)." Only one out of seven is concerned with Japanese affairs!

Predominance of external affairs is also apparent in our research services to the executive branch. We, unlike most parliamentary research organs in the world, provide the executive branch with informational support upon request. Since an agency in the executive branch is a specialized organ of the policy domain concerned, they rarely come to us for information on domestic affairs, except for general or historical information. However, for foreign information, particularly very specialized information on the state policies or legal institutions of foreign countries, they often inquire of us. This is, I am sure, because they rely on our analysts as experts of specialized fields in external affairs, as well as on the National Diet Library's collection of foreign materials that we use as research sources. Therefore, it may be fair to say that our Research and Legislative Reference Bureau is a research organ specializing in foreign matters.

Sources of Information

Our great advantage is that we have free access to the collection of the National Diet Library (NDL), which is the sole national library in Japan and collects not only domestic publications but also foreign books and periodicals. As of March 1985, the NDL had 4.178 million books, including 1.26 million foreign books, and 81,900 titles of periodicals, including 33,425 foreign ones. Among the vast NDL collection, it is the statutes, parliamentary documents, and government publications from abroad acquired through international exchange programs that are most helpful in our research work. For instance, Bureau analysts are able to catch recent amendments of laws and regulations in Great Britain through slip laws of the Public General Act and Statutory Instruments, of the Federal Republic of Germany through the Bundesgesetzblatt, of France through the Journal Officiel - Lois et Decrets, of the United States through slip laws of Public law, Congressional & Administrative News, and the Federal Register, of the Republic of Korea through the official gazette or Legislation and so forth. Since these materials are indispensable to our research, they are kept at the Statutes and Parliamentary Documents Division of the Bureau.

In addition to the NDL collection, the Bureau maintains its own research materials, including major overseas newspapers and magazines delivered airmail. The annual expenditure for purchasing these materials is approximately 30 million yen ($180,000).

Staff and Organization

The budgeted posts for the Bureau's staff number 157, and about 100 of them are for analysts. It may be noted that analysts are assigned to each research service, which consists of senior analysts, or each research division organized according to a specialized field. So analysts are engaged in research both in domestic and foreign matters of their subject area, irrespective of country. I am sure, despite the weight on foreign country research, that this type of organization is more effective than an organization in which the analyst is responsible for all aspects of a certain country, because what is required here is highly specialized knowledge of a certain subject area, and not knowledge of a certain country itself. However, the Bureau established a new division called the "Overseas Information Division" this June, when the whole Library was reorganized after the completion of the annex building. We, of course, intend to upgrade services to the Diet with respect to information on the general political, economic, and social situations in foreign countries, but at the same time we also intend to allow analysts to concentrate their efforts on research and analytical work in their own subject fields without being disturbed by inquiries concerning general foreign information. For this same purpose, we also established the Legislative Reference and Coordinating Division, which is responsible for reference services to the Diet of a general character. The Bureau's name was changed at the same time, from Research and Legislative Reference Department to Research and Legislative Reference Bureau. I hope these organizational changes in the Bureau will lead to our more effective use of foreign information, particularly to more in-depth use.

Owing to the organizational structure, all Bureau staff members are naturally expected to be able to read foreign materials freely. Staff members are recruited by the NDL through open competition and are assigned to the Bureau on the right-man-in-the-right-place principle. The NDL screening examination puts as much emphasis on applicants' foreign language ability as on their major. Every staff member of the Bureau is able to read English and at least one more foreign language, usually French or German, fairly well. Some know more; in addition to English, French, and German, the Bureau includes Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, Russian, Polish, Chinese, Korean and other language capability. However, since each staffer has his research field, the Bureau has no staff members solely for foreign language ability.

Overseas Study Program

Among the Bureau's various efforts of obtaining foreign information is our overseas study program. Under the program, one staff member of the Bureau is selected annually and sent abroad for about three months of study in his own research area. This program has greatly benefited us in our service to the Diet, particularly with regard to obtaining and utilizing foreign information.

On the other hand, the Bureau has also accepted some researchers from abroad, including staff members of the Indian Parliament and the Korean National Assembly. They, too, brought us information on their countries that was useful for our parliamentary research.

In addition to the overseas study program, some staff members of the Bureau have organized groups studying foreign legislation, such as the German law study group, the French law study group, and the Asia-Africa study group. Their regular meetings keep members abreast of current situations of those countries. Thus, it is fair to say that many Bureau staff members are greatly interested in external affairs and always keep their eyes open to events in foreign countries.

Publications

Regarding the Bureau's publications, one worth mentioning is the regular one prepared by the Overseas Information Research Service and the Overseas Information Division, called "Overseas News Guide." This publication introduces articles from foreign dailies and weeklies sent airmail, which are expected to be informative to Diet Members but do not appear in vernacular papers. Guest researchers are employed on a part-time basis for the "Overseas News Guide" to deal with languages which are beyond the ability of the Research Service and the Division.

Besides the "Overseas News Guide" and the Bureau's monthly organ "Reference," which I mentioned before, the bimonthly "Foreign Legislation" is also an important effort of the Bureau in providing useful foreign information to the Diet. It introduces important or suggestive recent legislations from a wide variety of foreign countries with translations of their full text, in addition to a list of titles of all new legislative acts of major countries. The publications of the Bureau, which provide foreign information transformed into forms for use by the ordinary Japanese,

have a high reputation not only among Diet Members and their staff but also among government agencies and even among academic society.

3. Future Expectations

In this age of internationalization, much of the information a parliamentary research organ is required to provide is inevitably concerned with external or international affairs. Moreover, such information has to be supplied promptly, whenever required. Parliamentary research organs around the world must promote cooperation among themselves in various ways, in order to cope with this demand.

We should not be complacent with conventional cooperation such as exchange of publications; personnel exchanges must be promoted, among other activities, because becoming acquainted with each other is definitely a basis for strengthening cooperation between parliamentary research organs. A couple of years ago, one staff member at the Bureau prepared a report for a committee print of the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress, upon request of his counterpart at the U.S. Congressional Research Service. This was possible because they had become acquainted with each other through mutual exchange of visits.

In addition to promoting international cooperation with other parliamentary libraries, the Bureau also plans to upgrade services to the Diet with the help of advanced technology. Besides the databases produced by the NDL, including the "General Index to the Debates of the National Diet" compiled by the Bureau, we plan to introduce commercially available databases, such as DIALOG and NEXIS. The extremely high fees of Japan International Telephone and Telegram, almost triple that of England's, have been an obstacle in the way of introducing an international online system. However, recent deregulation of the communication business is expected to bring competition to Japan International Telephone and Telegram, which will consequently lower fees a great deal. It will also encourage us to introduce and use telefaxes and other international communication devices. We expect much from these latest information technologies, in order to meet the heavy requirements from the Diet for foreign information.